



NEWS

Vol 3

North Texas IBM Personal Computer Users Group

No. 5

Special Interest Programs

Programmers

The Tandy TRS-80 Model 2000 presentation continued from the April general meeting into the Programmer's Special Interest Group meeting. The 2000 uses the 80186 microprocessor with 16 bit data path (vs. 8 for the PC's 8088 chip), has a clock speed of 8 MHz (the PC runs at 4.77 MHz), and its graphics can display 8 of 15 available colors with a resolution of 640 x 400 pixels. Tandy is taking an open-system approach to the 2000, and full details are said to be available in its \$19.95 technical reference manual.

Jim Hoisington will host the May meeting while group chairman Neil Bennett is at BYTE'S Chicago exposition serving on a panel discussing the question "Can BASIC be saved?" [Neil's revolutionary contribution to the PC BASIC environment, PROFESSIONAL BASIC, was released at the beginning of April by Morgan Computing.] The May meeting will be another of the group's famous general discussion sessions, and can be expected to include the latest available info on a possible PC Sr. machine (will it contain an Intel chip?), IBM's \$380 "call Boca" question-and-answer service, and other penetrating and relevant topics.

!PROFITABLE COMPUTING!
Dick Gall

Business Applications

Terry White, President of CompuSoftware, will demonstrate his company's A.I.M. (Attribute Inquiry Method) program. A.I.M. is an electronic file organizer that is geared toward the business person who is also a novice computer user. Entering data, changing attributes, making inquiries and setting formats is a simple procedure using A.I.M. Other features include generation of mailing labels, and report formatting.

Ricky Burke

A g e n d a

The general session at the May meeting will be devoted to Computer Assisted Instruction. We will have presentations by Reps from three different companies.

Charlie Worburg
representing IBM

Larry Thomas
representing Spectrum

Richard Morrow
representing HyperGraphics

Charles

Special Interest Group room assignments are shown on pg 2.

Computer Aided Instruction

This will be the first meeting of this Special Interest Group. We will meet from 11:00 to 12:00 in the auditorium and will continue the discussion of Computer Based Training started during the Group's main session.

Dean Powell

Beginning Assembly Language

This is also a new Special Interest Group, meeting for the first time. For novices who want to begin learning Assembly Language Programming... or just want to know more of what it's about. (Location to be determined.)

Ed.

Next Meeting May 12, 1984

Jesuit College Preparatory School
12345 Inwood Road, Dallas, Texas
(See map on page 2)
9:30 to 12:00



Computer Based Training

by Dean Powell

This month the Group's scheduled presentation will cover computer based training (CBT). What follows is a brief discussion of CBT terms and an introduction to some of the current thinking on this subject.

Early computer aided instruction (CAI) developed out of the work of behaviorist psychologists. They believed that people learned best when given reinforcement and the reinforcement should be given as quickly after a response as possible. Computers can be used to make controlled presentation of material, with learners pressing keys or manipulating some other input device to send measurable responses back to the computer. The computer can respond quickly to the input, thus providing rapid feedback. The learner can know what he does right and what he does wrong quickly and make adjustments based on this knowledge. The person changes what he does, and has learned something.

CURIOUS

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CBT allows monitoring of the behavioral changes. The developer of a learning module can track how a person goes through the module. He can then change the software module to make the material easier to learn. This is one of the primary goals of CBT - make the learning easier and faster.

Let's mention some of the advantages of CBT. CBT allows material to be prepared using some of the best instructional techniques. CBT material can be presented to a very large audience through distribution of the software to all PC owners. The material is standardized, that is, all the people using the material get the same material. CBT allows interaction with users. This has proven to be most effective. The learner can control the speed and flow of the program to keep the pace appropriate to the student user. CBT can monitor the effectiveness of the learning by keeping information about how long a person takes to complete the exercise, how many questions he gets right and wrong, and what path he takes through the presentation modules. The information can be used to modify the presentation contents to reach a more optimum training procedure. Standards for training can be better maintained as the presentation is made in the same manner during each presentation to each student, although the exact frames of flow encountered can be individually modified for each student based on his interaction with the computer.

Another advantage is the flexibility CBT allows: modules can be completed at the convenience of the user. The user determines when the module will be taken and when he wants to take breaks. The computer acts as a patient instructor who will present the material as many times as necessary. The user does not have to wait for classes to make nor does he have to travel to a specific classroom site. The material can be presented in a more timely fashion since the user can determine when the lessons are to be taken. The user is no longer dictated a time and place to receive the material. Well designed CBT modules allow the user to select the exact topics to be covered or reviewed. Review is easy and available when required.

The presentation can be made on any available minimal configuration PC.

CBT is costly to develop up front but becomes less and less expensive as more and more use of the material is made. Initial use of CBT should be for very commonly used systems or information. Additional CBT benefits may justify its use for additional, less commonly used information when other CBT advantages are of primary concern, i.e., ability to present material on any PC anywhere, anytime.

Come to this month's presentation and find out more...

Dean





Computer Based Training

Micro vs Mainframe

by Dean Powell

There is currently a lot of discussion of the advantages of micro versus mainframe computer based training (CBT) systems. The following covers some of the major points in this controversy. The discussion is most relevant when discussing the use of CBT in an industrial or educational setting, but may be of interest as part of this discussion.

CBT can make use of the many features built into the currently available microcomputer systems. The micros offer several advantages over mainframe CBT systems currently available.

Generally the micro computer based training is less expensive initially than the mainframe versions. Most of the micros offer some unique advantages which are incorporated into the micro authoring languages. Graphics are superior on several of the micro systems when compared to mainframe systems, though some mainframes offer graphic capabilities the micros cannot approach. Plato offers higher resolution screens, but no color. The Plato touch screen is also advantageous, though current micro computers offer touch panels, light pens, mice, track balls and joysticks each of which can be used to good effect. A touch screen micro based system has also been introduced. Micros offer combined good resolution pixel graphics, color, animation, and sound. Additional interfaces to interactive video disk and tape video systems allow additional picture/graphics capability.

Costs for initial entry are much less for micros - the system is standalone and complete for as little as \$2500, including any one of several micro authoring systems. You add terminals as you need them and each is a standalone development or presentation station. The current addition of hard disk drives gives massive storage capability and the common floppy gives a readily distributable media.

Mainframes offer more material online and offer immediate availability to everyone in a particular network, but interaction on the mainframe is often impacted by heavy CPU usage by other programs on the system, and suffer almost complete shutdown when very high priority jobs are being run. Micros offer much more uniform and controllable presentation of material as well as better immediate interaction and feedback. Some installations now use both, with data files on mainframe and final presentation via micro desk workstations.

Micros typically offer sound and in some cases, speech, which can add dramatically to the lesson presen-

tations. The use of special devices is controlled by you, giving flexibility to the system and ability to meet special needs. The disks with presentation programming are becoming rapidly less expensive to produce in small or mass quantities. These interactive video systems offer super opportunities for training in the near future. With such a system you can combine the best features of straight CBT along with the best features of film or video presentation, plus the added dimension of controlling the video presentation interactively.

Both mainframe and micro systems have their place. Many people find the advantages of each to be important enough to combine both types of systems into one. The IBM PCIS system is a PC version of a mainframe (IIS) system and is one approach to combining both types into an integrated system.

Dean



DISK OF THE MONTH

by Doug Windham

MAY HIGHLIGHTS

This month we have three (3) diskettes with an excellent collection of software. The diskettes for this month are:

DISKETTE MAY8401

PC-ENTRY Full-screen editor for data entry and maintenance of files created by PC-FILE.III (from Guy Andrews).

FLCHART Create a flowchart with LOTUS 1-2-3 by selecting from the symbols provided.

NEWKEY Here is the public domain keyboard enhancer, with most of the functions of PROKEY (tm) by Rossoft. It simplifies the entry of common keystroke sequences by allowing these sequences to be assigned to any key desired. It comes with sample setups for Wordstar and assembler. A USER-SUPPORTED program, by Frank Bell.

DISKETTE PD0003

LADYBUG An implementation of LOGO Turtle Graphics, by David N. Smith, as mentioned in the May 15th issue of PC magazine. **REQUIRES COLOR GRAPHICS AND 128K.**

DISK OF THE MONTH

(continued)

DISKETTE PD0004

UTIL is a general purpose collection of utilities for use under DOS 2.0. There are over a dozen separate functions to selectively copy and delete files or quickly browse thru document files, or sort directories 3 different ways (from Mutant Software.) A USER-SUPPORTED program.

SPEED411 Diskette speedup routine for DOS 2.x only. Just key SPEED411 and it's ready.

TALKSORT Sorts your PC-TALK.III directory into ascending sequence by name and remove all entries with the first five characters of name equal to dashes "-----".

SWPTR Provides the capability to logically swap the printer defined as LPT1: with the printer defined as LPT2:. This can be very useful to IBM PC owners who have printers connected to the two (2) parallel ports of their PCs.

UPNUM From the A> prompt key UPNUM to activate this program which displays in the top left corner of the screen an 'up arrow' if the keyboard is in upper case and a 'down arrow' if in lower case. It also displays the letters 'NL' if the keyboard is in 'NUMLOC'.

Doug 

DISK DETAILS

Price: \$5.00 Catalogs: \$1.00

Available at the meeting, in the cafeteria at the specially marked table, before and after the general meetings. Media: SSDD 5 1/4" diskettes formatted without DOS (160k). Public domain software only, standard full disclaimers. Call disk of the month chairman Doug Windham at 271-5727 evenings before 9pm to submit material and programs for future Disk of the Month issues. All back issues will be available at the meeting.

Copy deadline for June PC NEWS
is MAY 26th!



Software Report

by Dick Gall

THE SOFTWARE REVIEW CHARTER

Editor John Pribyl outlined the duties of the new software review editor staff position on PC NEWS last month. He had a difficult time choosing among the several volunteers for the job, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to have a crack at it for the first year. My objective is to form a software review staff using the other volunteers as an initial core group. Contact me at (H) 234-8888 or (W) 995-1058 or leave E-mail at STARTEXT Email ID #1483 or CompuServe ID # 71426,744 if you'd like to be part of the staff, have a suggestion on an item that should be covered, or have an item you'd like to submit on a one-time basis. We need all the help we can get.

"Why a staff?", you ask. "Thanks for asking", I reply, reaching for my soapbox. Because the potential job to be done is much larger than just reviewing the software packages that happen to come rolling in the club's door.

The membership of this users group is deeply involved in the wave of the micro revolution that started with the machine that is the group's namesake. Besides a considerable financial investment in systems and software, however, many have dedicated untold hours in learning to use and program their systems and sharing the knowledge they have gained. A growing percentage is involved in the dynamic leadership contribution that the DFW area is making to the micro industry. To the extent that this contribution is relatable to software, this software review editor includes the task of reporting on this leadership contribution in the job to be done by the software review staff.

MAGNA CHARTA

Beyond software that is received unsolicited, our first interest will be to cover software written, produced, or represented by group members. The initial review in this issue, for example, is of the AIM database system produced by COMPUSOFTWARE, INC. of Dallas. The EDS COMMUNICATOR/TEXT EDITOR program, which was one of the third-party software trailblazers right after the PC appeared, was written by member Owen Ward.

The next category is to announce the appearance of reviews of local software and the work of group authors ▶

Software Report (continued)

in other publications. There are several current examples of this category:

- Reviews of Morgan Computing's release of Neil Bennett's PROFESSIONAL BASIC appear in PERSONAL COMPUTER AGE (Vol. 3.2), BYTE (April), and the May issue of PC TECH JOURNAL.
- Member Betsy Simancher's article - the TYPESETTER CONNECTION - appeared in the April 17 issue of PC.
- Member Carrington Dixon writes a weekly column on the PC called PCTALK that appears on the local news-database service called STARTEXT. (The service is \$7.95 per month for unlimited 300-baud access time. Call metro 429-2655 ext. 832 during business hours for more info).
- Yours truly covered Morgan-Bennett's TRACE86 program in the February 21 issue of PC, a least-squares curve fitting package in the May 15 issue, and has a piece on bar code readers that will be included in a future PC special on "alternate input devices". The bar codes article includes a section on the hardware and software products of Richardson-based BAR/CODE INC (phone 231-2412). We also have a STARTEXT column called TIPRO on the Texas Instruments Professional Computer.

BURY ME NOT ON SILICON PRAIRIE

While on the soapbox, we'll take the opportunity to editorialize further and publicly resent the label SILICON PRAIRIE that some folks are trying to use to associate the metroplex with the entrepreneurial legend of California's silicon valley. We first saw this used in a Wall Street Journal ad for the "Venture Capital Conference" that opens May 17 at Loews Anatole in Dallas. The dynamic individuals and industries of the metroplex deserve to be properly identified as innovative far beyond the chip level. The software review staff is hereby challenged to help show why this is true.

Speaking of the staff: The initial group of volunteers includes Ben Driver, Jim Buckingham, Chuck Rowland, and Berry Sullivan. They're also available to receive your input on items to be covered. Their phone numbers are in the membership directory that's part of the April issue of PC NEWS. Staff, potential individual item contributors, and readers are hereby notified that the editor reserves full prerogatives to modify or reject

without notice any item submitted. Bylined reviews will be primarily based on the material provided by the identified author, unless otherwise noted.

THIS MONTH

An initial backlog of three packages is being reviewed by the Staff, and will be covered next month. Fortunately, member Ed Fries has provided an input on a locally-produced program so we already have material available for the initial review. Ed is a founder and president of COMMUNICATIONS PLUS ADVERTISING/PUBLIC RELATIONS (phone 783-8543), a Richardson-based company which specializes in what he calls "business to business communications".

A.I.M. - THE ATTRIBUTE INQUIRY METHOD
 by CompuSoftware Inc., Dallas
 phone 392-0051 price \$250
 Requires: 128K, DOS 2.0, 1-320K diskette
 review by: Ed Fries

My partner and I are writers. When we first got our PC, we spent 16 hours (each) trying to learn how to use a big, expensive database management system (DBMS). It was touted as being easy to learn - but we finally put it in a file cabinet because we don't have the time that we found is actually required to take advantage of many of its capabilities.

Then we got an assignment from a software consulting firm to produce a brochure for its first "retail" product --- A.I.M., the Attribute Inquiry Method, from CompuSoftware, Inc., in Dallas. CompuSoftware president Terry White assured us that even total computer illiterates could make this program work in a short period of time.

A.I.M. is a menu-driven electronic filing system which provides a simple yet powerful tool to create, maintain, and manipulate a database in a manner which best suits the user's needs. It was originally designed to solve a personnel agency's problem --- reduce the time needed to search several file cabinets to find the job applicants with the right education, skills, and experience for particular job openings. For me, it eliminates the time spent shuffling business development cards and puts order into project control.

The solution takes the form of an "attribute" or look-up table, with a 300-field capability. Individual records hold up to 15 fields of 30 characters each. A record can be recalled by its one "key" field or by inquiring for from 1 to 10 "attributes". ▶

Software Report (continued)

For example, if you've set up the months as attributes, you can make an inquiry against #52, which on my business development application, is July, and get all of the clients who are scheduled for calls in July. By inquiring on #9, I'll get a listing of all prospects involved with computer hardware. Of course, you can use any set of attributes you want, up to 300 per database.

The main menu provides entry to 7 modes: 1=system parameters, 2=setup new database, 3=format reports, 4=define attributes, 5=data entry, 6=inquiry, and 7=reports. Each mode loads in a few seconds, depending on the size of the database. Report formatting is easy and input mistakes are quickly corrected.

Speed is a strong point with A.I.M. It doesn't sort, it just searches for the attribute you specify, and puts the first one it finds on the screen (or sends it to the printer) as soon as it finds it. Another advantage is that search parameters are specified by just typing the appropriate attribute numbers (up to 3 digits each). Virtually any number of report formats can be specified (up to 6 lines per record), and report headers (up to 4

lines) per database. Reports and one-up labels can be printed or displayed on the screen.

The only limitation I found is that you can only put one database on each floppy (or on each hard disk directory). Fields and their lengths are fixed once a format has been established. This contributes to making A.I.M. easy to use and helps protect your database information from accidental damage, and should present no operational problem as long as proper care is used in the initial layout of the database.

I've had fun working with the program, and its helping me and my partner, Jan Skinner, organize our work. We're both non-programmers, and have journalism degrees from A & M and UT, respectively. We've been sharing a PC in the office since 1981, and we're now looking forward to acquiring a second PC and using A.I.M. to automate more office functions.

SEE A.I.M. RUN

Plans are being made to demonstrate A.I.M. at the May meeting of the Business Applications Special Interest Group.

30-30-30



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CHIPS

8087 Arithmetic Coprocessor	285.00
8087 Coprocessor Kit (Kit includes Software for use with Macro-86 Assembler & Basic Compiler)	300.00
Set of 9 Chips: 64K 200 Nano	62.50
Set of 9 Chips: 64K 150 Nano	67.50

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Supercalc 3	296.25

PC-Write

A Review by Betsy Sinnacher

HERE COMES PC-WRITE

....

Imagine the thrill of getting a good price on a sports car that is quick, responsive and handles great.

If you could apply that glow to software, that's how I feel about sending my \$75 registration fee to Quicksoft for PC-Write.

In December, I put my \$5 down on a Disk-of-the-Month copy of PC-Write. I loved the way it handled editing chores. But after I had typed in about 3,000 words of a magazine article, singing the praises of Shareware every time I zipped the cursor from one side of the screen to the other, the shortcomings of PC-Write version 1.0 became all too apparent.

Any time it had more than a page to print out, the program coughed up an extra page of white space between the middle of page two and the middle of page three. After wrestling for a few hours with the printer and PC-Write's print program, I reluctantly turned to EasyWriter 1.1.

Anybody else would probably have given up by then, but I was hooked. I write a short biweekly column for The Dallas Morning News' Discoveries section. I transmit it by telephone to The News' editing system, so printouts are not a problem.

PC-Write provided an easy way to insert the control codes that The News' Digital Equipment Corp. minicomputer needs to see at the top and bottom of all copy it gets. Although the capability to insert any ASCII character is intended for printer control, it could probably solve other problems as well.

Although I have EasyWriter 1.1 and now am using pfs:write for another project, PC-Write is my word processor of choice. I like its speed, which is especially apparent after a session with EasyWriter. (I still use EasyWriter to prepare copy for editors who also have EasyWriter.)

PC-Write has a number of cursor movement commands and even a transpose character key. The block definition and move keys are easier to use and faster than the other word processors I have used.

A "bookmark" is included to help you get back to a specific place in the copy.

Most important, PC-Write was obviously written by someone who has used a word processor extensively. The little touches are invisible -- until you switch to

another program and they aren't there. For example, you can toggle from insert to overwrite mode. That's not unusual, but, since the key you toggle is not INS, when you are in overwrite you can insert just a space with the INS key. The ability to insert a space with one keystroke while you're in overwrite mode doesn't seem significant until you edit a table of figures.

Finally, after using PC-Write for about three months, I began to get the same feeling about it that I have for KERA-FM. So I called Quicksoft and pledged \$75 on my Master Card.

About a week later, I received the following: an illustrated, letter-quality type printed manual, a reference card that fits above the ridge on the keyboard, a fresh copy of PC-Write (version 2.114) and a disk containing the source code for the program, all in a vinyl binder.

The manual is spiral-bound and well written. It starts from the very beginning, with a definition of DOS. Some of the illustrations look just a trifle homemade, but on the whole, the package is extremely professional.

Fortunately, version 2.114 represents a major effort to include more printer support. The extra white space I experienced in version 1.0 is gone.

Instead, PC-Write now offers more formatting commands, including easy ways to add lines at the top and bottom of the printed page. Some of the nice touches from the editor program are showing up now in the printer package -- like the ability to add text at the top of a document from the printer program. The example in the manual shows a way to prompt for the date and salutation of a letter at print time.

PC-Write offers the ability to redefine some of the keys, including a "sticky" key option for those who can't or don't want to hold down more than one key at a time. It comes with instructions for changing the definitions of keys.

There are more features. A lot more: split screen, a way to execute DOS commands without exiting the editor (if you have DOS 2.0 and more than 192K of memory), quick reformatting a paragraph at a time, a "hard" space (instructing the program not to break the line at that

space), help screens (one or more if your memory is sufficient).

If you register and someone else who copies your disk registers, you get a \$25 commission. But PC-Write is a bargain with no rebate at all.

Betsy

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JUKI 6100



A Printer review by Doug Windham

I finally got tired of my old dot matrix printer, one that most of you have never heard of. (Especially since the company went out of business over a year ago.) It had developed a heat related problem, and since service was impossible, I just lived with it, until I saw the JUKI printer displayed at one of the vendor tables a couple of months ago. I looked at it, saw it was a daisywheel printer and started to walk away until I saw a price tag of \$455. I could not believe it, the last time I looked at letter quality printers was after the Smith-Corona TP-1 came out at just under a thousand dollars and was noisy at best. I asked a few questions then forgot about it.

A few days later, my old printer overheated again, and got me to thinking about printers again. I struggled through what I was printing and started talking about a new printer to my wife (trying to plant the idea, and see how far it got) and she said, "Why don't you get a good one this time?". I asked her what she meant by a "good one". "One that does not look like it was printed on a computer." she replied. I remembered the printer I had seen at the meeting. We discussed the idea of a letter quality printer, and she seemed to like the idea.

My initial concern was printwheels and ribbons being hard to get or expensive because it was not a brand-name printer. I checked around town and found the ribbons (IBM Selectic compatible) were available everywhere and the printwheels were available through office supply houses (Triumph-Adler typewriter company).

I contacted the vendor and went over to look at it, tried it out, and brought it home. It works better than I hoped it would, and my wife uses it with PC-WRITE. (I've had the PC at the house for over a year and she had not touched it until I got the JUKI printer.) It does everything I need for home and small-business use. I have used bold, shadow, and underscore print functions but have not used subscript or superscript, yet. The documentation that comes with the printer is ok, but the





**MULESKINNER
ENGINEERING**

FLOPCOPY

FLOPCOPY is a program for the IBM PC that copies copy-protected diskettes. It runs on the PC, the XT, and the COMPAQ, with either DOS 1.1 or 2.0. FLOPCOPY is a local product, written and supported by Muleskinner Engineering in Dallas. It also costs less than other copy programs from places north of the Red River. The price is \$30.00. FLOPCOPY is available now at Wildcat Computing, located at 1830 Ave. K in Plano, (214) 424-3582.

You may also order FLOPCOPY by mail from:



Muleskinner Engineering
2000 Roundrock Trail
Plano, Texas 75075
(214) 245-4229

really good manual came after I mailed in my warranty card.

I have not had a single problem with the printer and use it regularly. I bought it from Hurley Computing.

Technical Specs:

Model: JUKI 6100 Daisywheel printer
 Speed: 18 characters per second
 List: \$699
 Interface: Centronics-parallel standard
 Serial interface available

Uses cut forms (up to 3 copies) or continuous on a 13 inch platten (forms tractor option available)

Prints bi-directional and has a 2K buffer built-in (expandable to 8K) at 10, 12, 15 characters per inch plus proportional.

Doug



